



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0759; Product Identifier 2018-NM-055-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus SAS Model A330-200 series airplanes; Model A330-200 Freighter series airplanes; and Model A330-300 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by revisions to certain airworthiness limitation item (ALI) documents, which specify more restrictive instructions and/or airworthiness limitations. This proposed AD would require revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive instructions and/or airworthiness limitations. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, Rond-Point Emile Dewoitine No: 2, 31700 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0759; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (phone: 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3229.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2018-0759; Product Identifier 2018-NM-055-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this NPRM. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this NPRM because of those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this NPRM.

Discussion

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2018-0034, dated February 5, 2018 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus

SAS Model A330-200 series airplanes; Model A330-200 Freighter series airplanes; and Model A330-300 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

The airworthiness limitations for Airbus A330 and A340 aeroplanes, which are approved by EASA, are currently defined and published in the A330 and A340 ALS document(s). The Safe Life Airworthiness Limitation Items are specified in ALS Part 1. These instructions have been identified as mandatory for continued airworthiness.

Failure to accomplish these instructions could result in an unsafe condition.

EASA previously issued [EASA] AD 2014-0009 [which corresponds to FAA AD 2017-10-24, Amendment 39-18898 (82 FR 24035, May 25, 2017) (“AD 2017-10-24”)] to require the implementation of the instructions and airworthiness limitations as specified in Airbus A330 and A340 ALS Part 1 documents at Revision 07.

Since that [EASA] AD was issued, improvement of safe life component selection and life extension campaigns resulted in life limitations changes, among others new or more restrictive life limitations, approved by EASA. Consequently, Airbus successively issued Revision 08 and Revision 09 of the A330 and A340 ALS Part 1, compiling all ALS Part 1 changes approved since previous Revision 07.

In addition, Airbus published Variation 9.2 to remove from ALS Part 1 some life limits connected to a deficiency in the fatigue performance of 300M high strength steel used in forgings. These life limits, applicable only for a specific batch of parts, are required by EASA AD 2017-0185.

For the reason described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2014-0009, which is superseded, and requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the applicable ALS.

The unsafe condition is fatigue cracking, accidental damage, or corrosion in certain principle structural elements, and possible failure of certain life limited parts, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0759.

Relationship Between Proposed AD and AD 2017-10-24

This NPRM does not propose to supersede AD 2017-10-24. Rather, we have determined that a stand-alone AD would be more appropriate to address the changes in the MCAI. This NPRM would require revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive instructions and/or airworthiness limitations. Accomplishment of the proposed actions would then terminate all requirements of AD 2017-10-24.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus SAS has issued A330 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 1, Safe Life Airworthiness Limitation Items (SL-ALI), Revision 09, dated September 18, 2017. This service information describes SL-ALI for the landing gear.

Airbus SAS has also issued A330 ALS Part 1, SL-ALI, Variation 9.2, dated November 28, 2017, and A330 ALS Part 1, SL-ALI, Variation 9.3, dated November 29, 2017. This service information describes revised life limits for certain parts.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI

This proposed AD does not include the Model A340 airplanes that are specified in the MCAI. Instead, we have added the MCAI to the required airworthiness actions list (RAAL) for the Model A340 airplanes.

FAA's Determination

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all the relevant information and determined the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new, more restrictive instructions and/or airworthiness limitation requirements, except as discussed under "Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI."

This proposed AD would require revisions to certain operator maintenance documents to include new actions (e.g., inspections). Compliance with these actions is required by 14 CFR 91.403(c). For airplanes that have been previously modified, altered, or repaired in the areas addressed by this proposed AD, the operator may not be able to accomplish the actions described in the revisions. In this situation, to comply with 14 CFR 91.403(c), the operator must request approval for an alternative method of

compliance according to paragraph (j)(1) of this proposed AD. The request should include a description of changes to the required inspections that will ensure the continued operational safety of the airplane.

Airworthiness Limitations Based on Type Design

The FAA recently became aware of an issue related to the applicability of ADs that require incorporation of an ALS revision into an operator's maintenance or inspection program.

Typically, when these types of ADs are issued by civil aviation authorities of other countries, they apply to all airplanes covered under an identified type certificate (TC). The corresponding FAA AD typically retains applicability to all of those airplanes.

In addition, U.S. operators must operate their airplanes in an airworthy condition, in accordance with 14 CFR 91.7(a). Included in this obligation is the requirement to perform any maintenance or inspections specified in the ALS, and in accordance with the ALS as specified in 14 CFR 43.16 and 91.403(c), unless an alternative has been approved by the FAA.

When a type certificate is issued for a type design, the specific ALS, including revisions, is a part of that type design, as specified in 14 CFR 21.31(c).

The sum effect of these operational and maintenance requirements is an obligation to comply with the ALS defined in the type design referenced in the manufacturer's conformity statement. This obligation may introduce a conflict with an AD that requires a specific ALS revision if new airplanes are delivered with a later revision as part of their type design.

To address this conflict, the FAA has approved alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs) that allow operators to incorporate the most recent ALS revision into their maintenance/inspection programs, in lieu of the ALS revision required by the AD. This eliminates the conflict and enables the operator to comply with both the AD and the type design.

However, compliance with AMOCs is normally optional, and we recently became aware that some operators choose to retain the AD-mandated ALS revision in their fleet-wide maintenance/inspection programs, including those for new airplanes delivered with later ALS revisions, to help standardize the maintenance of the fleet. To ensure that operators comply with the applicable ALS revision for newly delivered airplanes containing a later revision than that specified in an AD, we plan to limit the applicability of ADs that mandate ALS revisions to those airplanes that are subject to an earlier revision of the ALS, either as part of the type design or as mandated by an earlier AD.

This proposed AD therefore would apply to Airbus SAS Model A330-200 series airplanes; Model A330-200 Freighter series airplanes; and Model A330-300 series airplanes with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness that was issued on or before the date of the ALS revision identified in this proposed AD. Operators of airplanes with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness issued after that date must comply with the airworthiness limitations specified as part of the approved type design and referenced on the type certificate data sheet.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 105 airplanes of U.S. registry. We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

We have determined that revising the maintenance or inspection program takes an average of 90 work-hours per operator, although we recognize that this number may vary from operator to operator. In the past, we have estimated that this action takes 1 work-hour per airplane. Since operators incorporate maintenance or inspection program changes for their affected fleet(s), we have determined that a per-operator estimate is more accurate than a per-airplane estimate. Therefore, we estimate the total cost per operator to be \$7,650 (90 work-hours x \$85 per work-hour).

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator.

Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: "General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

This proposed AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus SAS: Docket No. FAA-2018-0759; Product Identifier 2018-NM-055-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

This AD affects AD 2017-10-24, Amendment 39-18898 (82 FR 24035, May 25, 2017) (“AD 2017-10-24”).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to the Airbus SAS airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD, certificated in any category, with an original certificate of airworthiness or an original export certificate of airworthiness issued on or before November 29, 2017.

(1) Airbus SAS Model A330-201, -202, -203, -223, and -243 airplanes.

(2) Airbus SAS Model A330-223F and -243F airplanes.

(3) Airbus SAS Model A330-301, -302, -303, -321, -322, -323, -341, -342, and -343 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 05, Time Limits/Maintenance Checks.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by revisions to certain airworthiness limitation item (ALI) documents, which specify more restrictive instructions and/or airworthiness limitations. We are issuing this AD to address fatigue cracking, accidental damage, or corrosion in principal structural elements, and possible failure of certain life limited parts, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Revision of Maintenance or Inspection Program

Within 90 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate the information specified in the service information identified in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), and (g)(3) of this AD. The initial compliance times for accomplishing the tasks are at the applicable times specified in the service information identified in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), and (g)(3) of this AD, or within 90 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(1) Airbus SAS A330 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 1, Safe Life Airworthiness Limitation Items (SL-ALI), Revision 09, dated September 18, 2017.

(2) Airbus SAS A330 ALS Part 1, SL-ALI, Variation 9.2, dated November 28, 2017.

(3) Airbus SAS A330 ALS Part 1, SL-ALI, Variation 9.3, dated November 29, 2017.

(h) Terminating Actions for AD 2017-10-24

Accomplishing the actions required by paragraph (g) of this AD terminates all requirements of AD 2017-10-24.

(i) No Alternative Actions or Intervals

After the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, has been revised as required by paragraph (g) of this AD, no alternative actions (e.g., inspections) or intervals may be used unless the actions or intervals are approved as an alternative method of

compliance (AMOC) in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (j)(1) of this AD.

(j) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov.

(i) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(ii) AMOCs approved previously for AD 2017-10-24 are not approved as AMOCs for this AD.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(k) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2018-0034, dated February 5, 2018, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0759.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3229.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, Rond-Point Emile Dewoitine No: 2, 31700 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

Issued in Des Moines, Washington, on August 16, 2018.

Michael Kaszycki,
Acting Director,
System Oversight Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.
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